

have the kind of access to health care that they deserve.

But the special interests are in town, and they are here to try to scare Americans, to try to convince Americans that if you have a health care bill of rights, you will lose your health insurance, that employers will not be able to offer health insurance to their employees. My colleague says it is a scam. I think he is right. We need to stand up to the dreaded special interest groups.

NEW BIG GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, what would you call a leader that wants to begin spending money before he even has it? Irresponsible? Liberal? Slick? Well, the budget just submitted by the President calls for spending on 39 new big government programs with tax revenues that the government does not yet have. Using the usual sleight of hand, the President's budget makes assumptions about billions of dollars from a tobacco settlement that does not even exist. Spending money based on tax increases that do not even exist adds new meaning to the expression tax and spend liberal. Now we have a liberal who spends first and hopes that a tooth fairy Congress will give him a tax increase later.

Mr. Speaker, the middle class has gotten the shaft long enough. The middle class is tired of promising something for everyone and sticking their families with the bill. Mr. President, do not break the balanced budget agreement with these new big government spending programs and entitlement expansions. It is time to say no to more big government.

PRESIDENT'S HEALTH CARE TASK FORCE

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it seems as though we are beginning this year on the same note as last year but with a different tune. Today we are going to vote on House Joint Resolution 343, an effort to deny the legitimate payment of bills incurred by the President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform convened in 1993. Some Members of this body do not want to pay the bills because they did not like the recommendations.

Let us be serious. Let us get on with the real business of this country like providing health care to indigent children, protecting Social Security, fixing our roads and bridges, providing day care, creating jobs with livable wages, hiring teachers and lowering class size.

Let us vote down House Joint Resolution 343 and get on with the real business of the American people.

RONALD REAGAN

(Mr. GUTKNECHT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, later today we are going to vote on a very important resolution concerning former President Ronald Reagan. I love President Reagan for many reasons, but he was a great storyteller. I wanted to relate a story that he told, and I quote:

I remember one day I was sitting in the principal's office. I was not invited there for a social visit. He said something that fortunately stuck in my mind and I remembered. He said, Reagan, I do not care what you think of me now. I am only concerned with what you will think of me 15 years from now. Thank the Lord I had the opportunity to tell him shortly before he died how I felt about him 15 years later, after that visit in his office. And I was very grateful for the influence he had on my life.

Mr. Speaker, President Reagan was a man who worked for the people. He was a man concerned about the people. He was a man who put the people first. It has not been 15 years since President Reagan left office, but I believe we, the people, can honor his life by renaming our national airport after him.

CORPORATE SPECIAL INTERESTS

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, today the corporate special interests are responding to the call of the Republican leadership to get off their wallets. Today they start spending millions of dollars, with the National Association of Manufacturers fly-in, to kill the bipartisan effort to pass a patients' bill of rights to protect people against the excesses of managed care, to make sure that people know that doctors are making the medical decisions and not insurance companies, to make sure that patients have a right to appeal the denial of services, to make sure that people understand that these medical decisions are theirs and between them and their doctors.

But, no, the Republican leadership in the House and the Senate have told the special interests lobby to come to Washington to spend millions of dollars to deny us the right to have a bill that has over 220 cosponsors, Republicans and Democrats, who know that their constituents need these protections against managed care. We have got to respond to the need of our people, not to the corporate interests and their million-dollar campaign.

UNFAIRNESS IN TAX CODE: MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I wanted to stand up and rise and speak towards an issue which deserves bipartisan support. That is the issue of eliminating the marriage tax penalty. I believe that the best way to frame the issue of the marriage tax penalty is to ask some very simple questions: Do Americans feel that it is fair that a married couple with two incomes who both work pay higher taxes under our Tax Code? Do Americans feel that it is fair that a married working couple, two incomes, pays higher taxes than an identical couple who choose to live together outside of marriage? That is just not unfair, Mr. Speaker, that is wrong.

On average, 21 million married working couples pay an average of \$1,400 more in taxes under our Tax Code today just because they are married. Here in Washington that is a drop in the bucket. Back in the south suburbs of Chicago, \$1,400 is a lot of money for the average of those 21 million married working couples: down payment on a car and a home, a year's tuition in a local community college. Let us work together in a bipartisan way and eliminate the marriage tax penalty.

HMO REFORM

(Mr. ROTHMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, today the special interests are swarming around this Capitol to defeat HMO reform, reform that will hold the HMOs accountable for their actions. The American people of both political parties want to make their health care decisions with themselves and their doctors and not with some accounting clerk, who is neither a doctor or a nurse or other health care professional, make that decision which often denies them the care that they paid for with their insurance premiums, where the accounting clerk often gets an incentive for denying that care.

Both political parties have put forth a bill to reform HMOs, but the special interests are now swarming over this Capitol to deny the right of the American people to get what they paid for when they paid their insurance premiums, the right to see the specialists they need, the right to know that they can go to the emergency room and not be turned away, the right that their doctor can send them somewhere and know that the patient that they send will get the care they deserve.

I will save the special interests some trouble coming to my office. The people of Bergen and Hudson Counties, New Jersey want HMO reform, and they will not let the special interests stop us from doing the right thing.